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ETHIOPIA: POWER OF MODERATION

Leo Silberman

ETHIOPIA, the only Christian country outside Europe to survive, the realm of Prester John who would come to the assistance of Christendom in a hour of crisis and redress its waning fortunes by attacking its foes from an unexpected flank, has been the subject of political speculation since medieval times.

Once again, Ethiopia attracts attention. What is her constructive role as the oldest independent country in Africa with so many traditions that hail from Jerusalem and Byzantium? She belongs to Africa, and the United Nations justly chose Addis Ababa as the seat for its newly founded regional organization, the Economic Commission for Africa. Bordering the Red Sea, in possession of the head waters of the Blue Nile, and governed by the Semitic Amhara and Tigreans, both immigrated from the Yemen (with which the country has many natural features in common) she also is part of the Middle East. When Egypt had a frontier dispute with the Sudan in 1958, Ethiopia offered to mediate. More recently, when Egypt and the Sudan came to terms over the distribution of the Nile waters, Ethiopia acted as the spokesman for the excluded African riparian states, advancing the suggestion of a TVA covering the length of the Nile stream. These interventions will become more numerous in the future.

There can be no longer a question that Ethiopia will be content to be an onlooker, "the world forgetting, from the world forgot." Below the surface of political shifts between the powers, Ethiopia is conscious as being of interest as the country with practically no experience of a colonial administration yet one which aims at the same objectives as the ex-colonial territories and the remaining colonies. Ethiopia grapples with modern influences in her own indigenous manner. The rest of Africa has been set in a colonial mould and are the result of non-African ideas and conventions. As in Asia we follow the progress of democratic India competing with totalitarian China, so in Africa the spectacle of this decade is the contrast between the almost undisturbed Ethiopian administration and the neighbors building on the heritage of colonialism.

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Some of the differences stand out. There is, for instance, little heard about nefarious imperialism in the Ethiopian press. Because the Italian occupation was so short there is much less bitterness about foreigners and less difficulty of coming to arrangements with Europe or America. Ethiopia retains a suspicion of foreigners (and who can blame her?) but it was noteworthy that while Europe tried war criminals, Ethiopia left the remaining Italians in peace. The latter fill an accepted niche in the economy. The Italian language in an ungrammatical form is freely employed as a *lingua franca.* Taxi cab drivers in Addis Ababa, using Italian roads and vehicles, also reply in Italian. To all inhabitants of Addis the central Haile Salassie I Square is still simply the *Piazza.* Even the Emperor's strong personality has not been able to impose itself here.

One might observe that in Khartum, English street names are more used than the new Arabic ones, but then in the Sudan pictures and pointers to the supreme symbol of the nation are few, whereas the personality of the Emperor ("His Majesty", as he is in polite conversation) is ubiquitous in Ethiopia. Nothing happens, the visitor soon learns, that has not the stamp of his approval. Everything finally remounts to his initiative. To the world he is known through his dignified appearances at Geneva and his trips to the capitals of Europe, to Washington, Moscow, Delhi and Tokyo. Ethiopia is much smaller than her neighbor, the Sudan. Her 395,000 square miles are considerably fewer than the million of the Sudan. But her ruler, Haile Salassie I, was for a generation the only familiar African figure. He has been at the helm for so long that it is difficult to imagine the continent without him. A kind of African Smuts, his piercing eyes scan a wide horizon, and at the same time express a gentler disposition. To his countrymen he *is* Ethiopia; as nearly universally popular as is possible in so diverse a country, he is known as a *good* man.

He has been responsible for Ethiopia's foreign affairs since at least 1918, i.e., long before he was crowned Emperor in 1930. He headed the liberation forces in 1940 and rebuilt the country. In 1950 the United Nations added Eritrea to his realm with the two ports of Massawa and Assab. What is equally relevant to his people is that his lineage goes back over centuries and claims to be the oldest dynasty in the world. People believe in the Solomonic descent.

There is no republican movement in Ethiopia. In ex-colonial countries politicians have to establish their legitimacy to populations which used to look to chiefs, now pushed aside, or to district officers who today are but the instruments of African governments. In Ethiopia the institution of King of Kings has never been questioned. Even in its period of decline in the 18th century it exercised its judicial and ceremonial powers. In the 19th century it was a fountain of strength and has added to its great authority ever since. While other monarchical governments wilted at the first touch of modernity—the Ottoman sultanate, the Egyptian ruler, the courts of India and China—Em-

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peror Theodore was able by 1860 to subdue all divisive provincial chieftains. His successor Johannes defeated the main external enemy, the Egyptians, in three successive wars. He also checked the Sudanese Mahdists, elsewhere victorious, though the campaign cost him his life. Menelik, who ascended the throne next, defeated a European power, the Italians at Adowa. This victory in 1896 saved Ethiopian independence. It set the stage for Menelik's dexterous negotiations which confirmed his extensive conquests, thereby releasing the Amhara from the mountain fastnesses into which they so long had been penned by the lowland peoples who had gathered under the flag of Islam, and the marauding pagan Galla. The Galla, Danakil and Somali were to a large extent incorporated into the Ethiopian empire. As the years proceeded their rebellions became less and less frequent.

Great inner security is imparted to Ethiopians because there never is any doubt where power resides. Indigenous and alien peoples feel sheltered under Haile Selassie's state umbrella which has been up so long. Foreigners know that the Emperor, even before he officially became the head of the state, was committed to progressive development of the country.

* * *

Progress gained a new momentum when, in the period 1950-54, monetary investments more than doubled in the private sector. It should be added that a single Dutch investor accounted for half the increase. Italian war reparations —$6.5 millions—are employed on the Koka electrical installations. The dam is complete and pylons and power lines to Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa are in position. The Yugoslavs building up Assab port are ahead of schedule and the harbor should be ready in 1961. The United Nations and Point Four have given substantial help; American aid amounted by 1956 to $60 millions. Further World Bank and American loans have been devoted to highway construction and telecommunications, the air lines, and the Development Bank designed to give credit to farmers. New German credits exceed seven millions. Industrial establishments now furnish the country with textile goods, leather articles, products of wood and much more. Up to the recent fall in the world coffee price, the country had a favorable trade balance. Loans were paid from earnings. Ethiopia was a good risk, and pursued a conservative economic policy. But the momentum has spent itself.

No oil or mineral discoveries have been made in recent years and coffee remains the country's main export, followed by hides and skins, pulses and oil seeds. The coffee production has risen in the world from 41 million bags in 1952 to a current 67 million and a restrictive agreement was signed in September 1959 by the main producing countries. Ethiopia has suffered severely from the drop in world prices but is no party to the quota system agreed upon. Her production is not large enough to make any difference to the world market and a restriction would have made no sense to the people who had just hailed

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the building of roads to the coffee forests so as to boost the exports. It would have been expensive to administer.

The loss of foreign exchange has forced the State Bank to curtail loans. Merchants and importers have been hit. Cotton goods consumption, always a reliable index of mass prosperity, slumped from $16 millions to 10. A so-called health tax was imposed, in effect an additional land tax, one third of the former taxes. The Five Year Plan has slowed down. This is the more serious because Ethiopia is no country which wants to be hurried even in the most advantageous economic circumstances. Caution, diffidence, secrecy are national characteristics. This is no country for the impatient investor, if only because the Amhara are by tradition land holders and warriors, not traders. The Muslims are the mercantile element in Ethiopia and isolated from the state apparatus that sanctions all important new enterprises. Outside the Imperial family few Amhara are associated in commercial ventures. To those who know Ethiopia, the fact that the annual budget was long kept a state secret does not astonish, nor that the Five Year Plan (of Yugoslav authorship) has only just been released, two years after it was submitted and accepted. Today its main assumptions are outmoded.

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The Emperor's visit to Moscow in the middle of 1959 was motivated by political considerations which we shall presently discuss, but it also was the result of the prevailing economic crisis. The Soviet promise of a loan of 400 million rubles filled a serious, disquieting gap in the country's finances. In a period of greater liquidity the surprise the Emperor's journey evoked among Ethiopia's American friends might have been productive of some additional American aid, but this has not been forthcoming in view of the tight money market in the United States.

The Soviet tax payer will have to bear the cost of the Russian commitment and he may be pardoned if he finds it a somewhat novel experience. *Pravda* has described the Emperor in the past as a tool of imperialism. Most unfairly, Mr. Spencer, originally from the Midwest, was singled out for attack. As confidential advisor to the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he served Ethiopian interests with loyalty. However, the American presence is nowhere more in evidence than in Ethiopia. At Asmara a United States telecommunication base is manned by a thousand American service men. There are army advisors, experts in agriculture from Oklahoma, Americans in the Ministry of Education (which because of its importance is under the direct supervision of the Emperor), Americans at the head of the State Bank, the Imperial Highway Authority and in civil aviation—until a year ago, the Imperial Ethiopian Airways were a subsidiary of T.W.A.

In mid-1959, when the Emperor visited the Soviet Union, the other new faces that later made their appearance in Moscow had not revealed themselves.

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The season of unsuspected goodwill tours was inaugurated by Haile Selassie. Even today a monarch is a rare thing at the Kremlin. However, Russian interest in Ethiopia is of long standing. Africa was of no interest to the Czars or the Russian Church with the exception of Ethiopia. The Czar sent rifles and ammunition before Adowa and never recognized the Italian claims to an Ethiopian protectorate. The Church sent prelates and invited the Ethiopian archbishop to preach in Russia. Disregarding the monophysite doctrine, the Orthodox clergy hoped that the Ethiopians would affiliate. Though there was no trade with Ethiopia, the Czarist embassy was a large one. Unique at the time, the Russian Red Cross fitted out a hospital in Addis. The Russian flag was briefly hoisted at Sagallo between British Zeila and French Jibuti on the coast. After the Second World War, the Soviet Embassy was generously staffed. Then, over the federation of Eritrea, the two countries took opposing stands. Only now has the Emperor returned to the balancing policies of Menelik. The Soviet delegation in Addis Ababa is still discussing on what the loans are to be spent. When they will have decided we shall know the number of Russian technicians that will work in the country. Probably Mr. Khrushchev, who has promised to visit the Emperor in Addis Ababa, his first though presumably not his last visit to Africa, will lay the foundation stone to an important project.

The Ethiopian government believes that it will control the communist influence. The Ethiopian public was pleased that so large a sum had been granted to Ethiopia. Whether this sentiment bears with it a growing uncritical eulogy of all things Russian remains to be seen. The authorities point out that there are no mass organizations equivalent to those that in democratic days existed in the Sudan, no large political women's or youth clubs that might come under communist leadership. In Eritrea there are a few trade unions, but none in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian peasant is anxious about the security of his land, but he can generally manage on what he now occupies. His periods of difficulty are confined to the exigencies of life, a marriage or a death. With irrigation and better access to markets he can hope for an easier life. He may have his difficulties with the Ethiopian Church. However, this institution too, ancient pillar of national independence, bestirs itself. The Italian occupation deprived it of some of its privileges. Today it is conscious of awakening Islam. New seminaries are available; translations into the common language are being made of the sacred texts, hitherto inaccessible in Ge'ez. The archibishop will be an Ethiopian not, as hitherto, an Egyptian Copt; bishops have been appointed. The missions compete with the Ethiopian Church: French Canadian Catholics are prominently at the University College of Addis Ababa; the Lutherans have just been allowed to open the first independent radio station.

The Emperor must have been impressed at Russian propagandist skill. He no doubt compared his reception in the Soviet Union with the correct but formal welcome in Brussels, Paris and Lisbon on the second leg of his voyage.

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Ethiopians are conservative and feel perhaps more secure with the Western reception given to His Majesty, but they would not be human if they did not note how he was appreciatingly inspecting rest homes in the Black Sea and factories in the Urals and Stalingrad, how he was honored by a doctorate of laws at the University of Moscow where he admired the 30 stories of that building housing 24,000 students. Size never fails to impress. The University College of Addis Ababa had less than one per cent of that number of students. It has always been, at least until lately, a special pet of the Emperor's. Exhibits in the Ethiopian section of the Leningrad Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology displayed an Ethiopian Bible and Ethiopian newspapers beside photographs of the Russian hospital gifts. On his way to the air port where a Soviet jet TU-104 was waiting, the road was lined with cheering peasants specially brought to town and athirst for royalty. The banners proclaimed an era of "Soviet-Ethiopian friendship." The Soviets gave the Emperor an Ilyushin-14 airplane and have started to build a school. The Crown Prince, on a balancing trip to America and Canada, was not treated to anything comparable. He actually had asked that little publicity should surround his call.

From the visit to Moscow a tangible political gain may spring for the whole of Africa and the Middle East. It was feared that the Cold War would run along the Ethiopian frontier, placing the Somalis, to be independent on July 2, 1960, in the pro-Soviet camp, while Ethiopia was wholly committed to American support. Now Somalis seek their friends where they find them—one might even hope in Ethiopia, though after the four affrays in November and December 1959 during which more than 40 people lost their lives, one's hopes for peace in the near future cannot be sanguine. The elections that took place on February 17, 1960, returned the Somali National League to power, and thus puts a more intransigent government in power in Hargeisa which will take over from the British.

The enmity of highland and lowland peoples, peasant for nomad, proselytising Christian against proselytising Muslim, is an old one. European imperialism took advantage of it. The British came into the Horn without firing a shot because the Somalis sought protection against the conquering Ethiopians. Italy pursued in Ethiopia a pro-Muslim, pro-Somali policy which came to an end with Italy's defeat in 1941. While yesterday's imperialism was the menace to Ethiopia's existence, today anti-imperialism threatens her. The five-pointed star of Somalia is a political program. No Mogadishu politician dare publicly oppose the pan-Somali aim of uniting under one administration the five Somalilands: the Italian Trust territory; the British Protectorate; the French Somali Coast; the Northern Frontier District of Kenya and the Ethiopian Ogaden. The latter is equivalent to a quarter of the Ethiopian empire. Its secession might encourage similar moves among the Galla or the Muslim Eritreans. Irredentism may be infectuous; it certainly is irritating. Fugitive Ogaden sultans reside in Somalia. The former President of the French Somali Govern-

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ment, Mahmud Harbi, is convening from his exile a Pan-Somali Congress which is to be attended by Somalis from all five territories. Until he was ousted from office he was defiantly promising that he would join Jibuti to a Greater Somalia, probably when the Emperor died and the Ethiopian unity of purpose weakened.

The extremist Greater Somalia League fared badly at the 1959 elections in Somalia, but the present Government of the Somali Youth League has increased the police vote by 40 per cent. It now proposes to raise an army alongside the police which hitherto fulfilled both functions. The proposal has internal reasons, due to the struggle between personalities and tribes, but Ethiopia cannot be happy. Rival groups might be armed and rallied under a cry of external danger. The Trust administration bequeaths an old quarrel over the Ethiopian-Somalia frontier, vaguely defined in the 1908 agreement. Numerous pleas by the General Assembly of the United Nations have not been able to bring the parties to a compromise. When last year the former Secretary General of the United Nations, acting as arbitrator, was also unsuccessful, the General Assembly gave up. The usual plea was not reiterated. In 1935, Mussolini started the war over this frontier, at the Wal-wal wells, which he claimed to be in Somalia.

To the outside observer the territory may seem dry wasteland but the prestige of both countries seems involved. Duplicating the problem is the question of the Haud, the winter grazing lands of the British Somalis. The Haud is an essential part of their economy, and one which they mean to have returned to their control. It was yielded to Ethiopia in 1897, occupied by a British Military Administration between 1941 and 1955, and thus only recently has retroceded to Ethiopian administration, now much more thorough than at any previous time.

For a time Ethiopia thought that she could come to terms with the British Somalis once the British were gone. The partiality of many Britishers for nomadic peoples is well-known and to some of these the Somalis have acted as "Ersatz"-Arabs. Their enthusiasm exceeded British self-interest. Britain has vital strategic interests in the area. Aden must not come under hostile guns lest the British position in the Red Sea, Kenya, even the Persian Gulf be endangered. Somali friendship is valuable; its price is the support of irredentism, or so at least Bevin, when Foreign Secretary, and the colonial governors of East Africa believed. The latter had little love for independent Ethiopia, the former thought his championship might ease matters for him in the Middle East. Mr. Lenox Boyd, as Colonial Secretary, announced in 1959 that the British Somalis would achieve self government not later than 1961 and could discuss unification with the ex-Italian Somalis. His concern was with Aden, where there are many Somalis. Ethiopia had hoped to deal with two separate Somalilands.

It is not said that even a federation of the two territories would exclude

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maneuvers. The trade between Mogadishu and Hargeisa amounts to only $300,000; there are the old rivalries between the two major Somali divisions, the Isaq and the Darod. Kenya nationalists have already declared that they would not yield ground to the Somalis, for their land might contain oil. Explorations are in progress in the vicinity of the Northern Frontier District. In Jibuti 27 of 32 members of the Territorial Assembly have asked that the French Coast become a department of France. It is the only remaining territory on the African continent that voted for a continuation of the status under the Fourth Republic, i.e., to remain a semi-colony under the supervision of Paris.

The Emperor in Paris and de Gaulle at Jibuti have spoken with the same voice. Agreement has been reached on the French-Ethiopian railway which has its terminus at Jibuti and which conveys 48 per cent of all Ethiopian goods traffic. This was the first large-scale investment in Ethiopia and remains by far her largest to date. During the last decade and a half, the number of long tons shipped over these rails increased from 166,000 to 254,000. According to the new agreement, the railways nationality will be changed from French to Ethiopian and its headquarters will be transferred from Paris to Addis. Ethiopia will purchase for about $400,000 another packet of shares bringing their holding to 50 per cent. Each side will be represented by an equal number of directors who elect a President. He is at present a Frenchman.

The cooperation of the two countries was reflected when the Ethiopian press noted the French atom explosion in the Sahara without adverse comments. Ethiopia has generally been a moderating force in the councils of African and Middle Eastern nations as her voting at the United Nations shows. She is a staunch supporter of the United Nations, as she was of the League of Nations. She must oppose aggressive ambitions, even aggressive anti-colonialism.

A people more phlegmatic than the Somalis would be nervous as annually the major part of their national wealth—in this case more than a million Somali camels—passed over the international frontier to spend the winter in a foreign, perhaps hostile land. Britain may have to adhere to her cession of the Haud made in 1897. But the Somalis say they were not consulted and hotly contest it. Therefore Ethiopians try to gain time. The natural hinterland into which the Somalis have to expand is Ethiopia. The Horn of Africa is a Malthusian area and the Somalis will find it more difficult to export their labor to Aden or elsewhere as nationalism mitigates against the employment of foreigners.

Ethiopia argues that but for the British they might have incorporated the whole of the Horn of Africa. To them an independent Somaliland makes little sense. It is not able to meet even half of its annual budget from its own revenue. It is divided into mutually suspicious blood feuding clans. The Somalis must accommodate themselves or be forever a troublesome people fishing in the brackish waters of their uncertain wells. All Somali rivers come from the Ethiopian highlands.

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The situation is not nice: twenty-four Somalis are studying in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. "If the Russians won't help us, the Chinese will", one hears occasionally at Boroma on the Haud frontier where Chinese porcelain of the 16th century strewn about the ruined cities outside testify to former Chinese trade in the Horn that might be renewed. The Ethiopians are unlikely to prolong the treaty of 1954 which stands and falls with the British presence; it runs to 1965. The treaty was criticized in the Ethiopian Parliament as a partial surrender of Ethiopian suzerainty over the Haud and therefore the foothills of the strategic town of Harar. The bargain permits the British liaison officers and Protectorate police to accompany the British nomadic tribes. It reserves offenders for Protectorate courts. It has given rise to disputes as nomads are not defined (is an itinerant trader a nomad?) nor is it clear if the continuance of the British-initiated school implies that new classes may be added as the children advance. Clashes between British and Ethiopian Somalis become international disputes with debates at Westminster. The Emperor, eager to assuage local hotheads, has hanged several members of the Ethiopian security force. Such strong measures combined with the international position of the Emperor with both an American and a Russian backing may possibly tide over the excitement and turbulence of the transfer of power to Somali governments.

More must be done to keep the problem contained within the orbit of the Horn of Africa peoples. Egypt once occupied the Somali ports and wants to return to the Southern straits of the Red Sea. She cannot be indifferent of what goes on at the head waters of the Blue Nile. She has Uganda African nationalists in Cairo and naturally supports Somali students there. She has exerted herself in Somalia where an Egyptian is one of the United Nations Advisory Council of Three and the 65 Egyptian teachers so far posted have quite recently been reinforced by further numbers. Egyptian broadcasts call upon Ethiopian Muslims to remember their primary loyalties.

Haile Selassie's tours abroad included a visit to Cairo in 1959 and provided a trade treaty with Egypt. In January 1960 he was the guest of the Sudan Government. Two Muslims hold ministerial positions in the Central Government and Ogaden sultans are now participating in district work.

* * *

Indirect Rule, as it would be called in a British territory, is nothing new in Ethiopia, but during the decades of centralization Christian administrators have been wholly in authority. Many Galla prospered in the service of the Ethiopian state but did so only if they professed Christianity. They constituted an enclave, somewhat as the Corsicans did in the French colonial service. Visitors to Ethiopia have admired the religious tolerance shown to the Muslims. The two peoples recognize each other's individuality. They do not eat together but in daily life share one another's burdens. The linguistic policy

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of the Empire in the schools, both primary and secondary, is quite different. To foster national unity Amharic is the language demanded of every school child. The Muslims have been assured, in the Emperor's speech in Parliament on the occasion of the 29th anniversary of his coronation, that more schools will be built in the Ogaden and in other Muslim areas.

Looking about him on this occasion, the Emperor could claim that this Parliament was an institution entirely of his own making. As far back as 1930 at his coronation he had said: "I wish my people to learn the idea of representation that they may one day rise and take their part in the government of their country." He then knew that he would have to associate the non-Christian peoples more closely to the state. The first Parliament was entirely nominated. It met behind closed doors and so people did not realize that it was more than a rubber stamp—that it forced the ministers to justify their decisions, something which taxed the capacity of many of the old gentlemen.

The lower house of the present Parliament, making up two thirds of the combined Parliament, is elected by universal franchise of all adult men and women. Each constituency is represented by two members, thus giving the Muslims a chance to vote for a Muslim candidate, the Christians for a Christian. In British colonial territories the vote is reserved in the first instance for the elites. There, on the other hand, freedom of agitation and the press is usually allowed. In Ethiopia the printing presses have been the property of the government, though here there has been a recent relaxation. There are, however, no parties; the Emperor denies the need for them. In the Sudan it was seen that they all wanted the same thing: schools, medical services, wells, fewer taxes, and were distinguished only by their following, religious and tribal character and so were an element of disunity. The Sudanese pushed ahead with a full Westminster-type constitution, which did not outlive the economic crisis when the cotton price fell. The Ethiopians have taken a moderate course. Parliament still does not publish its proceedings and thus its impact is limited.

The "young men," foreign educated and sometimes frustrated, point out that Parliament was not consulted over the Soviet visit and did not debate it. They complain that Somalization of District Governors in the Ogaden has not gone far. In some places the Amhara District Governors have Somali assistants, and more and quicker advance is needed. The "young men" are a separate class with plenty of their own problems which they have a habit of projecting. Many object to personal rule as capricious and chafe at the patronage that goes with an old aristocracy. The ministers in turn find the young man half-baked and devoid of political sense. They cleave to the formulas learned in textbooks. Some cases of suicide have been known and some novels have been written about the intellectual who returns from schooling abroad and cannot find a suitable job. The insecurity of service saps vitality. Good men are wasted in minor positions; fear of demotion wastes good men in

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senior ones. The system is by modern standards inefficient, but the foreign experts find the old men who do not pretend to meddle in the technical aspects of the ministries easier to get on with than the intelligentsia and more aware of the political possibilities. Once a foreigner has won their confidence he enjoys it wholly and is kept on even after his usefulness is past.

The relation of foreigners to Ethiopians has been referred to with respect to the civilian population and equally important is the type of international technical secretariat that Ethiopia has pioneered. Though seeming to be more shut off than the colonial territories, Ethiopia since the days of Theodore has "shopped" in all the civilized countries, allowing no single country to preponderate in the public service, but hiring experts wherever a country has become famous for a certain aspect of modern life. With a fine gift of perception for national differences, the jealousies of related but distinct nationalities are exploited: the Swedes put to training the Air Force; the Norwegians responsible for the Navy; Italian engineers on the Awash and Yugoslavs at Assab; Americans on the highways and Britishers in the police; Dutch to lay out estates and Germans to do the mapping; Indians run the officers' school. Colonial countries look to one metropolis. Their civil service has a unity of tradition, but the very concentration on efficiency and the administrative aspects of government has starved the political sense of the colonial peoples. They have to learn from Ethiopia as they now diversify their administrations so as to be less dependent on the former metropolis. The new governments still are not sure of the time tables, whether they should follow bureaucratic convenience or the "logic of the situation," with a resulting hesitation that annoys everyone.

The excellent Ethiopian sense of timing is well exemplified in the trips of the Emperor, not only to Moscow but also to Cairo and Khartum. At the time President 'Abd al-Nasir was opening his attack on Iraq and was likely to placate the Nile countries. The Emperor is calling this year on the independent African countries ahead of Dr. Nkrumah or for that matter, President Nasir.

Ethiopia, because of her special position as the independent country of Africa that survived the obliterating imperialist sandstorm, has a special attraction to black peoples everywhere. The Bible speaks of the Ethiopians; separatist Negro churches use the Ethiopian regalia in Johannesburg no less than in New York. In the West Indies a half-secret society calls itself Rastafari, the name of the present Emperor while he was still a power behind, not yet on, the throne. In Ethiopia there is no hesitation, even among the majority of the "young men", of rejoicing in the national peculiarities of the country. An election poster by the young Ethiopian artist Afewerk Tekle is evidence of that. Working in what might be called a late Renaissance style, he pictured the spirit of Ethiopia in monk's habit kneeling on a cloud as it receives the gift of the constitution. This is a book held by two hands reaching from the highest Western skies. Below members of Parliament are filing into the well-known

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building that contains both Houses. They are welcomed by the Emperor and at his side the Crown Prince with the caption: "Enter and give good counsel." As in an old painting you see voters still filling the papers in a polling booth. No African country other than Ethiopia would have commissioned such an "unmodern" poster—yet. For all their nationalism they are still too keen to prove their up-to-dateness in European terms.

Incidentally, Ethiopia herself looked to Europe in the past. Her earliest links were to Jerusalem and Alexandria. In the Middle Ages embassies were sent to the Popes. During the Age of Discovery, the Ethiopian King of Kings proposed dynastic marriages to European princes. He thought of parcelling out the Red Sea coast among France, Spain and Portugal. The first American consul at Addis Ababa tells the story of a distinguished Haitian approaching Menelik with the idea of forming a society for the uplift of Negroes. He asked the Emperor to be its patron. "I am fully in agreement with your objectives," Menelik said, according to Mr. Skinner, "but you have called at the wrong address. I am a Caucasian."* The Haitian would be unlikely to meet with a similar reply today. Suddenly there is an awakening interest in Africa. The librarians in Addis Ababa find that readers demand books on African leaders and problems. Ethiopia has her own fellowship program for African students wishing to attend the University College of Addis Ababa. One of the students was a former Somali district officer, the first Somali graduate from the British Protectorate. He has now returned to British Somaliland to engage in politics. Ethiopia will command attention in the new countries, particularly among the more conservative sections, sceptical whether the brash nationalists with their new-fangled, foreign slogans and their disregard for tradition and legitimacy are the only or best people to bring Africa into her own.

Quite possibly these sections form the majority opinion in Africa, though they may temporarily be in the background. As more becomes known about Ethiopia in the rest of the continent, the realm of Prester John may rise to a new leadership, with its persuasive sense of historical sanction and divine guidance somewhat as the Ethiopian poster in a truly African manner expounds. Internally as in external relations, Ethiopia is a moderating force steadying the ships of state of a number of African countries, and if the alliances extend, of some in Asia as well.

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* R. P. SKINNER, *Abyssinia of Today*. New York: 1906, pp. 131-2.

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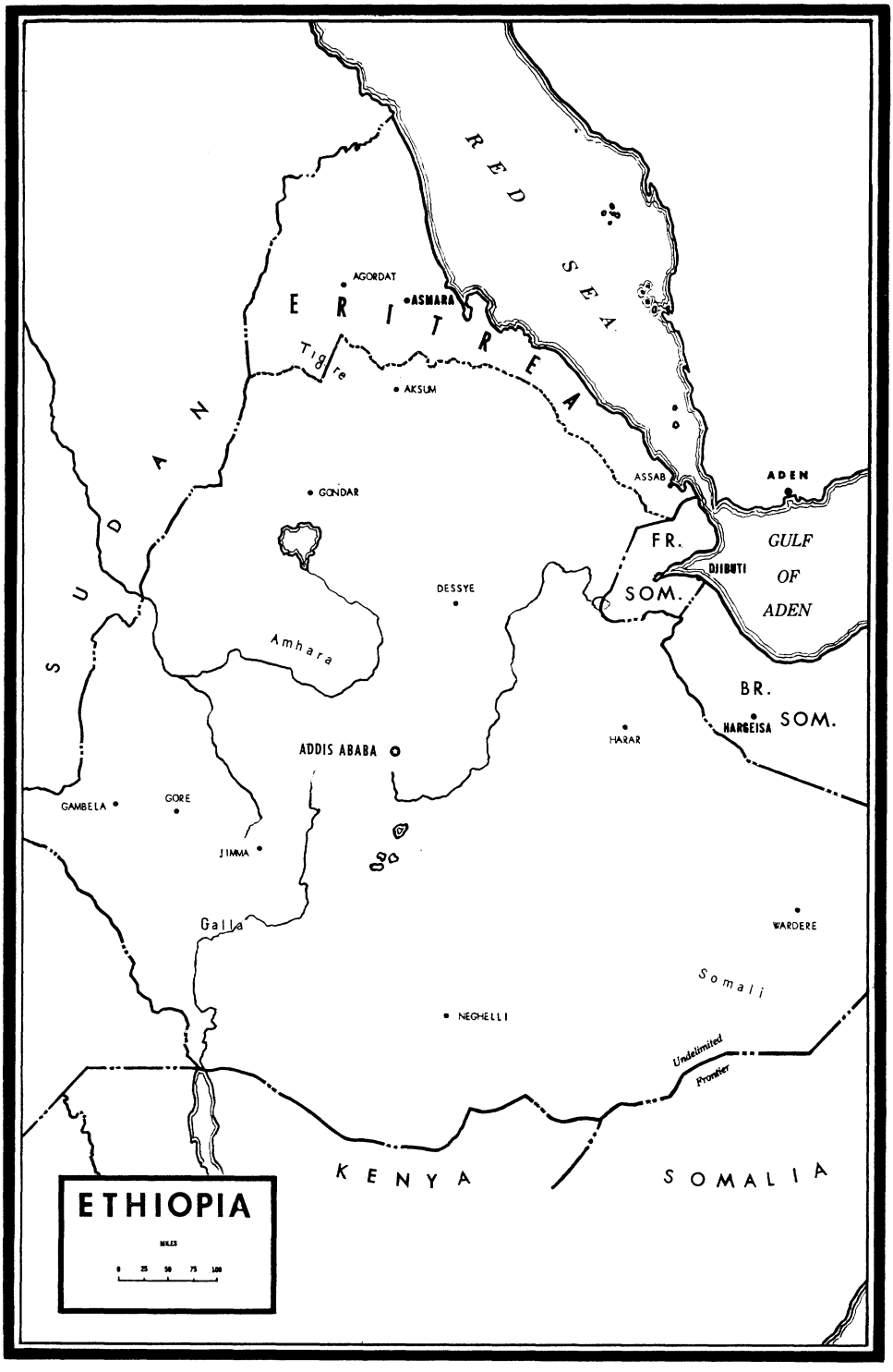

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